بسم

لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

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نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

The Review of Religions

RABWAH - WEST PAKISTAN

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Islam and Democracy

Dr. M. Nasim, London.

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When we come to examine as to what form of government Islam recommends, we have to bear in mind certain fundamental characteristics of the teachings of the Holy Prophet. The first and foremost is that he laid the greatest possible emphasis on the Unity of God. Indeed the very first sentence which a person has to recite, if he wants to become a Muslim, is, "I bear witness to the fact that there is no god but one God, and Muhammad is His prophet," and this is repeated.....again and again in every call to prayer five times a day. Thus it is incumbent upon every Muslim to believe in the Unity of God.

The second fact is that it was the Holy Prophet of Islam, who emphasised the one-ness of humanity. It is laid down in the Holy Quran as follows :

1. Say, ⊙ People ! I am the messenger of Allah towards you all." (7 : 158)
2. "We have not sent thee, but as a mercy for the nations." (21 : 107)

3. "Certainly you have in the Apostle of God an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in God and the latter day and remembers God much." (33 : 21)

Another claim that he made, was that he was sent as a guide for all time and Islam was a complete religion. The Holy Quran says :

4. "This day have I perfected for you, your religion and completed my favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion." (5 : 3)

It was in accordance with the divine commands that he sent his followers as missionaries of Islam not only to the neighbouring countries, but to distant places like China, and sent letters to the Kings of Persia, Constantinople, Abysinia and others explaining to them his message, and inviting them to accept it.

Mr. Arnold says, "Thus, from the very beginning, Islam bears the stamp of a missionary religion that seeks to win the hearts of men, to convert them and persuade them to enter the brotherhood of the faithful ; as it was in the beginning, so has it continued to be up to the present day.[1]

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The claim of the Holy Prophet of Islam being that he was a guide for all the nations and for all time, it was neither possible nor practical to lay down rules in every detail for the conduct of human affairs ; for if it were otherwise, then that course of conduct would have applied to a particular country and its people, and not in general, it can be illustrated by taking a common example of dress, which should be worn by people. It is obvious that in a world where such a diversity of climates and customs exists, it would have been most impractical to prescribe a particular dress with every detail. If for example, the dress in vogue in Arabia had been prescribed as the only dress to be worn by a Muslim no matter in which country he was living, it would not have been suitable for those living in very cold countries. It is for this reason that Islam lays down in general terms as to what parts of the body should be covered by men and women, and has left the details as to the form and material to be used to the people themselves. In this way a great scope has been left for the

1. Arnold : Preachings of Islam P. 41.

exercise of the ingenuity of human mind. The same is the case with the constitution of an Islamic State. For that also certain fundamental rules have been laid down in the Holy Quran. These together with the practice of the Holy Prophet in carrying out the administration of the state of which he was the head, form the basis of a general outline of the constitution. Here again the details have to be worked out by the people themselves.

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Keeping these points in mind, let us take a rapid survey of the different forms of governments, and then see what type of government according to modern standards, corresponds with the one prescribed by Islam.

In Encyclopaedia Britannica, Government is defined as a group of human beings, large or small, who control the pattern of change in all organization.[2]

It is thus a type of political organization that directs the affairs of an entire city, state or nation. It has authority to enforce its rules on all alike; it operates according to a certain plan.

The nature of government differs according to the purpose of the body of the people to be governed and the circumstances under which the government is conducted. Plato considered the best form of government to be one in which the power to govern is vested in the men best qualified for the business of government. Such a government he called an aristocracy. Aristotle divided all governments into three principal kinds. A monarchy was a government conducted by a single person in the public interest. An oligarchy was a government conducted by a minority primarily in their own interest. There is yet another form of government known as "theocracy" which literally means, "rule by God", a term applied to any state the government of which is devoted primarily to the achievements of religious end, and is markedly subject to an organized priesthood. The term includes forms in which supernatural being is conceived directly to exercise sovereign power, as well as those in which divine power is wielded through human intermediaries.[2]

"The typically theocratic state was that of the Jews, which in the narrowest sense was the work of God's hand, and, by

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 10 p. 561.
2. Cellier's Encyclopaedia Vol. 18 p. 534.

conditions of its existence was wholly sacred and inviolate. Founded by Jehovah and directly governed by Him its kings were no more than His servants, who, being guided by His prophets, enjoyed no personal right of initiative, " (1)

After the end of world War No. 2, the territories of Italy, Austria, Germany and Japan were occupied by the military forces of the victor powers. They were governments by the military over occupied enemy countries. In its nature it is authoritarian and severe as it has to establish law and order.

The most popular form of government of the present time is what has been termed as "Democracy". But as to its nature and general concepts, there is wide divergence of views. An American authority says about it, "Democracy is one of the most controvercial of concepts. Not only does it have powerful enemies, but even its friends do not always agree about what they are defending. Beyond the common idea that democracy is the popular control of government, there is no universally accepted deflnition.[2]

"Democracy means a society all of whose members are equal and free, none of whom are excluded from taking a part in governing it, and who accept the decisions, within limits of a majority gained at a poll fairly conducted. Disagreements grow as these terms are specified further. For example, in what are the members equal ? From what are they free to do what? what part are they going to take in governing ? Are there limits to what the majority deeide? If so what are they ? What are the conditions in which a vote can be called fair ?

"The demos", usually rendered from Greek as the "people, the common people". But the term "the demos" used in another sense implies that there is no "the rest", no group excluded, and so the word "democracy" bears also the meaning of a society in which no member or group is excluded from a share in governing or from its demands. These other terms ending in "cracy" stand for societies divided into groups, one ruling and the other ruled" ([3])

1. Bastings Encyclopaedia of religions Vol. 6 P. 359
2. Encyclopaedia Americana Vol. 8 P. 638.
3. Chambers Encyclopaedia Vol. 4, p. 430.

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Most contemporary democratic governments can be classified according to the relationship which exists between the executive and the legislative branches. Thus a government may be a "presidential" form of government, or a "cabinet" responsible or "Parliamentary" form of government. In America we find the Presidential form of government, where the President who is elected independently of the legislature and not directly responsible. The members of the cabinet are nominated by the President to whom alone they are responsible. They may or may not be important party or legislative leaders or even important leaders. The President himself is responsible solely to the electorate and holds office for a fixed term regardless of the measure which he may recommend to the legislature.

In Great Britain, on the other hand, we have a parliamentary or cabinet form of government. Here the members of the cabinet or the executive are taken from the legislative body and is responsible to it, usually to the popularly elected chamber of that body. Cabinet responsibility to the legislature is a legal one, political responsibility is to the electorate which may change the party complexion of the representative body, and thus bring the legislature and executive agencies into harmony. While parliament grants the British Cabinet very large powers, it also holds the cabinet responsible for its acts. The leaders of the legislative and executive branches are the same person in the parliamentary form of government. In whatever form this system might work the essential feature is that it is based upon the self-rule of the people, and rests upon the fundamental assumption of the equality of all individuals and of their equal right to life and liberty of thought and expression.

"The moderen concept of democracy, on the other hand, finally emerged as a result of the perennial search for the best and most equitable form of government. Largely as a result of of the re-dis-covery of Aristotle himself, the Middle Ages, preoccupied with the idea of unity, considered the monarchy—the rule of one—to be the best form, the one most suited to secure this unity". [1]

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 7 P. 184,

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While dealing with the necessity of devising necessary limitations on political authority, in order to realise its essential function for caring of the common good, the authority says, "in the early days of western civilization this limitation was purely internal and spiritual. The ruler was the representative of God and should do nothing in his regime that was contrary to the will of God; that is nothing that God would not do if He were the direct ruler."[1]

From this arose the idea of Divine Right of Kings, which prevailed in England in the time of Stuarts and in France, in the time of Louis. The same is the case of Muslim kings of the various periods from Omayyides and Abbassides down to the Moghul rulers in India, and the Sultans in Turkey. Another feature of democracy connected with the idea of political eqality is that of social equality. In a democratic society the social status, wealth or hereditary should not give to individuals any privilege in public life or before Law. While this principle was evolved in America, the growth of this idea in its coloured population has created a very sharp conflict, and the question is being asked whether the practice of equality should be restricted to the white population, which form the controlling groups, or should coloured populations, also come under its protection. At the present time the question whether coloured students are entitled to receive education in state controlled schools side by side with the white population has taken a very serious turn in some Southern States of America. The ruling of the Supreme Court of America that it is against the constitution of the United States of America to segregate the white and the coloured students in such institutions is being defied even by the Governors of some states, and many subterfuges are being devised to get round this ruling of the highest Judicial Tribunal.

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To start with, both in England and the United States of America the right to vote was confined to property owners. It was gradully that voting powers were extended to all citizens as of by right, and even then under various restrictions. In no country the entire population had the right to vote. Age, sex, education, residence, property, race, and religion are qualifications

2. Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 7, p. 18.

which have been employed, at one time or another, to determine eligibility in taking part in an election.

The principal functions of any government are three :— legislative, executive, and judicial. In the early days of the development of political institutions, these functions were usually combined in the person of a king or the Senate, and theoretically, they could also be combined in a democracy in one institution, provided that that institution was subjected to periodical elections. However, all modern theories of government demand that Judiciary be separated from the executive, who is entrusted with the administration of the laws.

"Electoral systems in a democracy have also varied in different circumstances and lands, and at different times in the same land, in accord with varying theories of the nature and extent of representation itself."[1]

From the above brief survey, the essential features of democracy are the following :—

1. Oneness of humanity
2. Equality before law
3. Assertion of the dignity of individual, and laying emphasis on economic equality
4. Association of people with the authority.

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Let us take these principles in turn and see what are the teachings of Islam with regard to these features.

1. Oneness of Humanity

In Islam greatest emphasis is laid on the unity of God, and from it came about the idea of oneness of humanity, as one God meant one universe and therefore one law. A few quotations from the Holy Quran will show how the unity of God has been stressed:-

1. Your God is one God; there is no God but He, the Most Merciful. In the creation of heaven and earth, and the alteration of night and day, and in the ship which saileth on the sea, laden with what is profitable to mankind, and

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 7, page 185.

in the rain water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening again the dead earth, and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface; and in the changes of winds, and the clouds balanced between heaven and earth—are signs to people of understanding; yet some men take idols besides God, and love them as with the love due to God. (2:164-165)

2. God! There is no God but He—the Living, the Eternal. No slumber seizeth Him. Whatsoever is in heaven or in earth is His. Who can intercede with Him but by His own permission? He knows what has been before, and what shall be after them; yet nought of His knowledge shall they grasp but He willeth. His throne reacheth over the heavens and the earth and the upholding of them both burdeneth Him not. (2 : 256)

3. Mankind were one community, then they differed among themselves, so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and sent down with them the Book containing the truth that He might judge between the people wherein they differed. (2:214)

4. And Allah has said, "Take not two gods, He is only one God."

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5. Believe therefore in Allah and His apostles, and say not, three; desist, it is better for you, Allah is only one God. (4:171)

6. Then again it is laid down in the Holy Quran, that notwithstanding the apparent diversity there is but one law for the whole universe and the harmonious working of everything from the smallest particle to the immense heaven points to the existence of an intelligent Supreme Being. Thus the Holy Quran Says:

1. Who created the seven heavens alike; thou seest no incongruity in the creation of Beneficient God ; then look again, canst thou see any disorder? Then turn back the eye again, and again; thy look shall come back to thee confused while it is fatigued. (57:3,4)

2. The sun and the moon follow a reckoning and the herbs and the trees do above. (55:5, 6)
3. And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is ordinance of the Mighty, the Wise. And for the moon We have ordained stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and bodies float on in a space. (37:38-40)

Ages passed before humanity conceived the unity of God. It also took centuries before it achieved the conception of the unity of law. If there were more gods than one in different parts of the world, it is evident that there could not be one law for all men.

The form of Greek government in the ancient time was called "democratic". But in reality it cannot be termed as such, as it recognised different laws for different clasess of its citizens, for example the laws were different for freeman and slave. In Roman law also there was a distinction between the rights and obligations of persons occupying different status in the society.

The idea of oneness of humanity was first proclaimed by the Holy Prophet of Islam. There are many verses in the Holy Quran to this effect :

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1. And people are not but a single nation, but they disagree. (10:19)
2. And this your community is one community and I am your Lord, therefore have regard for your duty to Me, but they seemed divided among themselves into parties each party rejoicing in that which is with them. But leave them in their overwhelming ignorance till a time. (23 : 54-4)
3. This your community is one community only and I am your Lord, therefore serve Me. And they cut off their affair between them ; to Us shall all come back. (21:92,93)
4. All people are a single nation ; so Allah raised prophets (among all) bearing good news and giving warning, and He revealed the Book with truth. (2:213)

Although People differed in their colour and spoke different

tongues, they were recognised as if they were members of one family enjoying the benefits of nature in equal share.

Thus the Holy Quran says :

1. And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours; surely there are signs in this for the learned (30 : 28)

2. O people! Fulfil your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind, and spread from these two many men aud women. (4 : 1)

3. And He it is Who made the stars for you that you might follow the right way thereby in the darkness of the land and the sea.....and He it is Who has brought you into being from a single soul, then there is for you a resting place and a depository..... And He it is Who sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth with it the buds of all plants. (6:98-100)

Islam has laid down one law by which all people were to be judged; and it was that everyone will receive the award or punishment which will depend upon his actions.

The Holy Quran says :

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1. He who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. (99:7,8)

2. Say,O unbelievers! You shall have your recompense and I shall have my recompense (109 : 1,6)

3. And if they call thee a liar, say my work is for me and your work is for you; you are clear of what I do and I am clear of what you do. (10:41)

4. I believe in what Allah has revealed to me of the Book, and I am commanded to do justice between you; Allah is our Lord and your Lord; we shall have our deeds and you shall have our deeds. (42 : 15)

5. The most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you who has the greatest regard for his duty. (49:13)

2. Equality before Law

In Islam the law is one for all, be they rich or poor, high or low. Even the Holy Prophet himself is subject to the laws laid down in the Holy Quran, which says :

"I follow naught but what is revealed to me: indeed I fear the chastisement of a mighty day, if I disobey my Lord. (10:15)

The law is the same for everyone as the Holy Quran says :—

1. O You who believe ! Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah's sake, though it be against your own selves or your parents or near relatives ; if he be rich or poor. Allah is most competent to deal with both ; do not follow your low desires lest you deviate ; and if you swerve or turn aside, Allah is surely aware of what you do. (4 : 135)

2. O You who believe ! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably, act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and fulfil your duty to Allah ; Allah is aware of what you do. (5 : 8)

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The Holy Prophet of Islam says, "Listen O ye mankind ! Your God is one God and you are likewise descended from one common father. So bear in mind that an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab and a white man has no superiority over a coloured man, and a coloured man has no superiority over a white man except on the basis of personal virtue. Now tell me (says the Prophet) have I conveyed to you my message ?"

In the administration of justice, the Prophet was scrupulously even-handed, Muslims and non-Muslims, friend or foe, were all alike in his eyes.....Notwithstanding the deep rooted malice of the Jews against Islam, when a case between a jew and a Muslim once came up before the Prophet for hearting, he decided in favour of the former, regardless of the fact that the Muslim, nay, even perhaps the whole of his tribe might thereby be alienated. And what such a loss meant to Islam in those days of its weakness and hardship is obvious enough. In short, he was the embodiment of

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the Quranic verse which says, 'Let no hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably, act equitably, that is near to piety."[1]

The strict devotion of the early Caliphs to the Holy Prophet of Islam is too well known to merit any description here. They tried to follow the example set by the Prophet. During the time of Caliph Omar, a pattern of government was devised which might be taken as a model outline of an Islamic state. An incident occurred during his time which shows absolute equality of all men before law. The Rt. Hon'able Syed Amir Ali describes it in the following words : Jabala, King of the Ghassannides, having embraced the Faith, had proceeded to Medina to pay his homage to the Commander of the Faithful. He had entered the city with great pomp and ceremony, and been received with much consideration. Whilst perfoming the tawaf, or circumambulation of the Kaba, a humble pilgrim engaged in the same sacred duties accidently dropped a piece of his pilgrim's dress over the royal shoulders. Jabala turned round furiously and struck him a blow which knocked out the poor man's teeth. The rest of this episode must be told in the memorable words of Omar himself to Abu Obaidah, commanding the Muslim troops in Syria. "The poor man came to me," writes the Caliph, "and prayed for redress ; I sent for Jabala, and when he came before me I asked him why he had so ill-treated a brother Moslem. He answered that the man had insulted him, and that were it not for the sanctity of the place he would have killed him on the spot. I answered that his words added gravity to the offence, and that unless he obtained the pardon of the injured man he would have to submit to the usual penalty of the law. Jabala replied, "I am a king, and the other is only a common man. "King or no king, both of you are Musulmans and both of you are equal in the eye of law. He asked the penalty might be delayed until the next day ; and, on the consent of the injured, I accorded the delay. In the night Jabala escaped."[2]

What a glorious example of even-handed justice between two parties—one of them a king and another a poor man. Caliph Omar told Jabala to his face that unless he obtained the pardon of the

1. Muhammad Ali : Muhammad, the Prophet p. 258.
2. Amir Ali : Spirit of Islam p. 279.

injured man, he would be punished according to the law of the land. When this king asked for a day's adjournment, it was only given with the consent of the other party. No consideration of any kind entered into the mind of the Caliph in holding to task even a proud king like Jabala. Various other examples can be quoted to show that in the administration of justice absolute equality was meted out by Muslims who were Muslims in the true sense of the term and were keen to follow the examples set before them by the Holy Prophet of Islam and his eminent successors. Islam cannot be held responsible, if later on, some Muslims, be they kings or holding other important offices in the government, did not act on these principles. It must be considered their individual acts, and no blame can attach to Islam.

3. Assertion of the dignity of individual and laying emphasis on social equality.

Another unique contribution made by the Prophet of Islam to human civilization was the idea of human dignity, which was a natural corollory to unity of God. The Quran has said that man is the noblest of God's creation, and he would be degrading himself, if he were to worship or bow before anything which is inferior to him. It says :

1. What ! Shall I seek for you an object of worship other than Allah. While He has made you excel all created things. (7 : 140)
2. What ! Do you serve what you hew out ? And Allah has created you and what you make. (37 : 95-96)
3. Why dost thou worship that which neither hears, nor sees, nor does it avail thee in the least (19:42)
4. Therefore avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false utterances—being upright for God, not associating with Him; and whosoever associates (others) with God, it is as though he had fallen from on high, then the birds snatch him away or the wind carries him off to a far distant place. (22:30,31)

As man is the best of God's creation, it is laid down that he would be degrading himself if he was going to worship sun, moon, stars, or other things, as they were created for his service.

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The Holy Quran states:

1. Allah is He Who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may run therein by His command, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks. (45:12)

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2. Dost thou not see that God makes the night to enter the day, and He makes the day to enter into the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient to you; each pursues its course till an appointed time, and that God is aware of what you do? (32 : 29)

3. And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His command; surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder. (16:12)

4. And He has made subservient to you, whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself; indeed there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (45:13)

As a result of these teachings it has been truly said, "that from the slave of nature's forces which man generally was at that stage of human civilisation, the Prophet thus raised him to the dignity of the master and the ruler, and it was due to this realisation of man's position in the universe that the Muslims in their very early history took vigorous strides towards the expansion of knowledge and advancement of the sciences. Reading and writing was within a few years spread throughout the whole Arabia and other countries which came under the influence of Islam, and the Muslim state so encouraged the pursuit of study and scientific research that centres of learning and universities sprang up throughout the empire of Islam."[1]

In any order of human life, the question of wealth undoubtedly occupies a very important place. The teachings of the Prophet of Islam deal with the manner of acquiring wealth, its possession and proper distribution. Unlike some other religions, Islam neither prohibits the acquiring of wealth nor directs that if it has been

1. Muhammad Ali : The Prophet Muhammad P:167

gained it should be discarded. It is laid down in the Holy Quran:

1. O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give thanks to Allah if He it is that you serve (2:172)

2. And He it is Who provides gardens of vine, trellised and untrellised and palms and seed produce, of which the fruits are various sorts, and olives and pomegranates, like and unlike; eat of its fruits when it bears fruits and pay the due of it on the day of reaping...And of cattle. He created beasts of burden and those which are fit for slaughter only; eat of what Allah has given you (6: 142, 143)

3. And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear and thou seest the ships cleaving through it and that you might seek of His bounty, and that you may give thanks (16:14)

4. And do not give away your wealth, which Allah has made for you a means of support to the weak of understanding and maintain them out of the profits of it. (4:5)

5. It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth. (2:29)

6. Men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn (4:32)

Thus unlike some other religions the acquiring or possession of wealth, as such, has not been prohibited. Muslims are even asked to pray to God for the good things of this life as the Holy Quran says:

"Our Lord! Grant us good in this life and good Hereafter." (2:201)

But acquiring of wealth by unlawful means is prohibited:

1. And do not swallow up your wealth among yourselves by false means, neither seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the wealth of men wrongfully while you know. (2:188)

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2. O You who believe! Do not devour your wealth among yourselves falsely except that it be trading by your mutual consent. (4:29)

As there are differences in the mental and physical capacities of different individuals, and in the circumstances and environment, there is bound to be differences in their earnings, which cannot be avoided. There is no system yet devised by human ingenuity in which all human beings can become equal from monetary point of view. The Holy Quran says, "And Allah has made some of you excel others in the means of subsistence, so that those who are made to excel do not give away their subsistence to those who are under them that they should be equal therein." (16:71)

Notwithstanding this unequal acquisition in wealth by different individuals, it has been very clearly laid down that mere accumulation of wealth did not raise the dignity of a man, nor did poverty degrade him. Such changes in the status of a man are of no importance to God, and it should be the same with those who believed in Him.

1. And were it not that all people had been a single nation, We would certainly have assigned to those who disbelieve in the Beneficient God to make of silver the roof of their houses and the stairs by which they ascend. And the doors of their houses and the couche on which they recline. And of gold; and all this is naught but provision of this world's life, and the higher life is with thy Lord only for those who have regard for their duty. (43: 33, 34, 35).

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2. The most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you who has the greatest regard for his duty. (49 : 13)

By leading a simple life and not leaving anything after his death, the Holy Prophet has demonstrated in a practical way that wealth was not a criterion of greatness or honour. About him Gibbon says: "The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty; the apostle of God submitted to the menial of the family;

1. Gibbon : Decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Everyman's Library Vol 5 page 275.

he kindled the fire, swept the floor, milked the ewes, and mended with his own hands his shoes and his woollen garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit he observed, without effort or vanity, the abstemious diet of an Arab and a soldier."[1]

The Holy Quran warns that the love of wealth leads to moral degradation and kills feelings of sympathy, and so the undue accumulation of wealth is condemned. The Holy Quran says :

1. But you do not honour the orphan;nor do you urge one another to feed the needy;and you eat away the heritage with devouring greed; and you love wealth with exceeding love. (89:17,18,19,20)
2. Those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend in Allah's way, announce to them painful chastisement ; on the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; This is what you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoarded. (9:34,35)

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It is thus evident that while Islam allows earning of wealth, it condemns its hoarding. It therefore lays down rules for preventing its accumulation. By its law of inheritance, Islam prevents property from remaining in few families or indivinuals;and by its institution of Zakat also the unused wealth is taxed. There is yet another levy by which rich persons are asked to relieve the distress of the poor, and is regarded as a meritorious act in the eyes of God. This is called *Sadqa* or voluntary charity.

Hazrat Abu Saeed Khudri relates that once the Holy Prophet said that he whose means and resources are more than his genuine needs, should part with the surplus in favour of the indigent, and the destitute.

Hazrat Ali once said, "God has made it obligatory on the rich to minister to the needs of the poor. If, in spite of this obligation, the poor go unfed or unclothed, or experience economic distress, it only shows that the rich have not fulfilled the obligation laid on them by God. On the day of reckoning they will be called upon to account for this lapse on their part, and God will inflict a grievous punishment on them.

(1) Muhammad Hussain : Islam and socialism PP 24-25

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The Holy Quran says :

1. The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears with a hundred grains in every ear, and Allah multiplies it for whom He pleases. (2 : 261)
2. And give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for the emancipation of captives. (2 : 177)
3. O You who believe ! Give in charity of the good things that you earn and of what we have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at giving what is bad in charity. (2 : 267)

No religion of the world before Islam had consecrated charity, the support of the widow, the orphan, and the helpless, by making these principles as the positive enactments of the system.

Thus Islam strikes a middle course between capitalism and communism. It prevents accumulation of wealth, and it enjoins the rich to spend for the benefit of the poor. It does not allow forcible expropriation of the property as advised by Marx.

Mr. D.de Santillana writes, "Potentially any man is entltled to anything because all the world's goods have been created for the use of men. By instituting property God has set a limit to this right; thus enabling every man to know the lot assigned to him by God in the general stock of wealth and securing social order. But it would be erroneous to suppose that property as a right is unlimited—it finds a limit in its very nature and the end to which it may be subservient. Earthly goods are bestowed upon man in order that he may provide for his existence, that is to say, to employ them usefully, not to squander them with out purpose ; or according to his whim. Following precepts of the Holy Quran and the traditions, Muslim law brands as a form of squandering any consumption of wealth not required by real use. In its eyes, prodigality is a form of mental disease. It insists on moderation, following the middle way in the use of riches as most consonent with the nature of law and with the purpose for which God bestowed His goods upon the mankind."

4. Association of the People with the authority.

As has been shown above in the religion of Islam there is no distinction between man and man on the plane of humanity. They are all equal in the sight of God. It has broken down the barriers of colour, caste, aud birth among the Muslims. Likewise its idea of a State is democratic, but it is one based upon the fear of God and upon responsibility to God to start with. But the importance which Islam gives to consultation is evident from the fact that an early chapter of the Holy Quran is named *Shura* or Counsel in which it is laid down :

And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer and their government is by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them. (42 : 38) Then again it is stated :

"Allah commands you to entrust the responsibility of government to those worthy of it, and when ye govern and judge between people, govern them with justice." (4:58) Rulership is treated as a valuable trust and people are enjoined to vote only those who are worthy of trust. From this verse also it is clear that in Islam, the wish of the people has to be ascertained in matters of the appointment of those who are to be entrusted with the task of running the government of a country. Thus the appointment of the ruler or the chief executive is in the hands of the people.

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In conducting the affairs of the state, it is expressly laid down in the Holy Quran that they should be settled with mutual consent. (42:39). Even the Holy Prophet of Islam was told, "Consult them in general, but when thou hast made up thy mind then trust in Allah alone." (3 : 159) The Holy Prophet of Islam has also emphasised the importance of consultation by saying that never will my community be united in error.

From the above teachings of the Holy Quran and the precepts of the Holy Prophet it is evident that consultation of the people in the affairs of the state, and the ascertainment of their views in the election of the head of the state form the basic principles. But the details of working out of this system has to be determined by the people themselves according to their

requirements. As I have shown above the idea of the present day democracy developed very gradually from the mediaeval notion of the ruler as representative of the community with the obligation to look after its interest without any right of the people to operate through him. With the growth of political conciousness the necessity of limiting the absolute power of a ruler came into existence. Then came the ideas of liberty and equality, by which the autonomy of the individual in the political society was stressed, and liberty implied the right of the individual to settle his own destiny in complete freedom from any outside influence. In the beginning "liberty" meant the right of men to be ruled in their own interest. Then came the development of this idea of liberty to the right of the individuals living in a state to have an equal share in the government. This necessitated the grant of franchise restricted by the qualification of age, sex, education, residence, property, race, and religion to start with ending in universal adult suffrage in some countries, as there are numerous countries in the world even today where the franchise is very limited, just as there are many others where there exists the authoritarian or beauracratic form of government.

Thus ascertaining the wishes of the people, means of communication, and the moral and intellectual development of the people will have to be taken into consideration. If a country has no good means of communication, as obviously it will not be possible to ascertain the wishes of the people living in distant places within a reasonable time, even though they may be morally and intellectually fit enough to vote. Conversely if the people of a country are still in a backward state, it is obvious, that they will not be in a position to exercise their right of vote in an intelligent way. It is therefore not right to judge a people in ages gone by and compare them with the modern standards, when science has made such a tremendous progress and is eliminating the idea of time and distance. With the amazing progress in science during this century revolutionary changes are taking place in every sphere of human activity.

In ancient times democracy meant that the whole citizen

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met in the market place and decided all matters of common concern. The Romans undertook to embody the citizenry by using various fictions, but the system broke down when Rome expanded and the Romans adopted the Asiatic technique of deifying the emperor. Historically speaking the representative assemblies developed in most European countries in the course of the later middle ages as an important part of the mediaeval constitutional order. Though great variations existed, the three estates were composed of nobility, clergy and the merchant of the cities (burgess). To the modern world, democracy means that the whole citizenry goes regularly to elect representatives, after having read about their platform speeches in the newspapers or listened to them in meetings or over the radio or television.

But in time of emergency or war, democracy takes a different form, as a writer says, "It may be noted that even in modern time democracies become dictatorship in time of war or great crises. But this is inevitable, as at such time the paramount duty is to save the existence of the state itself. As Abraham Lincoln said during the American Civil war, "Measures otherwise unconstittutional might become lawful by becoming indispensible to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the Nation. "He said, in effect, if it becomes necessary to cut off a leg to save a life, we do not hesitate, and if I have to crack the Constitution in a few places to save the nation, it is going to be rough riding for the Constitution.

As I have remarked above, Islam provides the fundamental principles for various human activities--whether social, political, or economical leaving the details to be worked out by the people according to their own peculiar circumstances best suited for their genius and environments.

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Thus while Islam prescribes a form of government emphasising, (1) the unity of law, (2) Equality before the law, (3) Asserting the dignity of the individual, (4) Association of the people with the authority, it leaves the details of the system by which they are to be attained by the people themselves. It is therefore evident that the forms of the governments will vary from country to country. Even in our own time, we see that democratic

governments have taken different forms in different countries. While in England we have a Parliamentary form of government, in America we have Presidential form of government. In Switzerland and France we have quite different forms of government, and yet all of them are called democratic governments. In all these forms the system for ascertaining the wishes of the people is different. In the same way, Islam has not prescribed any particular system for determining the will of the people. Thus it leaves a wide choice of methods to the people to adopt in a particular place. They may have direct or indirect elections based on universal or limited franchise. They may select proportional representation, referendum, single transferable vote or any other method. As Islam lays very great emphasis on the freedom of conscience, the only restriction is that people should be allowed to exercise their choice in a free manner.

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Islam and Communism
Genesism of Religion

A.S. Madsen, Denmark.

Whereas Islam, and to some extent all great religions, assert that religion originates where God reveals Himself to man, Marxism is of course on a par with all earlier atheistic currents in history in declaring that man created religion. But whereas much of the earlier criticism often took religion just as a fraud of some concocting brain that sought to get power over fellow-beings, Marxism starts on a more scientific basis. We find in Cornforth's Dialectical Materialism Vol. LLL, p. 89, a most authoritative statement of how religion appeared according to the Marxist view :

"When society divides into classes and a ruling class is formed, there is formed the abstract idea of the relationship between ruler and ruled.....The next step is to separate this abstract idea from the actual experiences.....and to form the idea of God, the ruler of the universe."

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Now this is regular 'economic determination': these and these economic changes in society create a corresponding ideological reflex. Only when we know in social affairs that there are some who rule and others who are ruled—the abstract idea of 'Ruler' is appearing. This sounds very reasonable: man goes from the concrete to the abstract and here he finds a material fact which he can reflect in his ideology.—But the abave statement contains at least two basic errors :

1. It follows from the above that the idea of God first originated when human society had developed into a class-society-whereas it is a patent fact of religious history that we find religions as soon as we find men, and it is equally a fact that the first society as the Marxists admit themselves, was a society without classes, a sort of original communist society where all means of production were common property. Nevertheless this society had religion.

2. The above statement seems to implicate that the idea of God was the idea of one all-emcompassing and all-ruling God at once. Usually we find Marxists explaining to us that religion developed from polytheism over monolatry to monotheism. So here must be some unclear thinking. Further: if the above mentioned general rule that ideas only reflect material relations is correct we should expect that as there were several rulers—so there had to be several gods. At any rate in the beginning! And that the idea of one God should first appear when society politically had developed into autocracy, i.e. the dictatorship of one man. That this is not the fact is obvious. On the contrary we find that great autocracies as ancient Egypt were polytheistic. And oppositely we find that the American Indians who possessed only a rudimentary form of society were monotheists.

Modern history of religion teaches us, in complete comformity with what the Quran says on this point, that original religion was monotheistic—or rather henotheistic (the difference being that monotheism involvas universalism, whereas henotheism is just practical monotheism, as the Jewish religion, which asserted there was one God, but that He was only the God of Israel). So if society in its development has any effects on religion, it must be in a pluralistic direction i.e., as society develops and specializes in different trades and corresponding classes man craates different gods with special offices, god of fertility, god of trade, god of wisdom etc.etc. But all the time we find that men adhere to the original idea of one God, now giving Him the role of Supreme God with the minor gods as His helpers.

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This cannot be explained on the basis of Marxism, because if the theory of Marxism is true we should expect a development towards increased polytheism as society still is getting more and more specialized, but on the contrary we find that monotheism is throughout history on a constant advance, so that even polytheistic religion as Hinduism wishes to appear as monotheism.

According to Marxism there are two major motive forces in the creation of religion by man.

1. His inability to understand, to find out real causes.
2. His fear of the unknown world around—a fear that has

its origin in lacking understanding.

Let us consider these two points :

1. Marxists say : man cannot find the true causes of, for instance, rain and thunder, but as he knows that he and other beings can effect certain causes. he assumes that there is some personal force behind the phenomena. But when man will realize the real causes of rain and thunder, the idea of gods or God will become gradually weaker and finally it will disappear like vapour in the rays of the sun of knowledge. If this was really a true explanation, we should expect that religion was losing ground in strict accordance with the progress of science. But that is not a fact. Perhaps religion is losing ground for the time being, but we know that there are ups and downs in man's religious fervour—throughout history, whereas the progress of science has been rather steady. The fact that many modern scientists adhere to religion also goes against this.

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2. Religion seems not to have originated in the way, Marxists dream and fancy. It seems that religion appears as a consequence of a definite religious experience—to which we will return in a little while.

3. When man 'faces' these unknown, unseen powers which he has invented himself, he is filled with awe and fear, and so he really starts inventing religion, i.e., a bundle of ceremonies, magic and prayers, sacrifices, hymns and services—all with the intention of appeasing and pleasing the angered gods. So goes the thinking of our Marxist. But is it really true that ignorance creates fear ? In some cases it may be true, but certainly not in all, not even in most cases. On the contrary we find that ignorance makes people bold and audacious. A man will not be afraid of a serpent unless he knows that its bite is fatal. And in our modern age, where knowledge has reached unexpected heights, fear has not disappeared. No, it has increased to a terrible extent owing to the *knowledge* that

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atomic weapons might mean the end of humanity. So it seems to be just the opposite of what Marxists predicted: fear is increasing with the increase of knowledge (scientific and technical knowledge, that is).

There is one point of great importance, which should be taken into consideration, before we proceed to see what Islam says on the origion of religion, and that is one of the cardinal points in the Marxist critique of religion, viz., that religion serves the interests of the possessing classes in their exploitation of the working classes by directing their energy from their fight for better living-conditions to religion as giving them hope to get a better life, not in this world in the next only. Marx and Engels found ample evidence of this thesis (that religion was opium for the people, as Lenin afterwards said in the then German, or for that matter, European Church. Here we find the reason why the critique of Marxism often seemed to 'mis the point'. It was totally directed against Christianity, which Marx identified with religion as such. But whereas traditional Christianity builds all its teachings on the doctrine that 'the Kingdom of God is not of this Present world', this cannot with any right be said to apply to Islam. Islam is not ascetic, world-denying; on the contrary it is optimistic, human and progressive in all its teachings. Its aim is not exclusively to prepare man for his next life, but to order and regulate life here in a progressive and human way. Therefore it has been said, and rightly so, that Islam is not so much a religion as a 'way of life'. Whereas Christianity mostly has been anti-human, anti-scientific and reactionary, which is perhaps seen most clearly in the fact that European advance, scientifically, economically and socially was initiated with a signal revolt against the Catholic Church. Europe would never have been able to start its career of progress, had not the yoke of medieval Catholicism been thrown off in the period, which is called Renaissance from a cultural and scientific view-point and Reformation from a religious view-point. Of course Islam has been now and then misused by reactionary powers to support both exploitation and imperialism (esp. Ottoman Turkey). But directly opposed to Christianity Islam is not *in itself* guiity of that misuse, because this misuse could only be

effected by a direct treason to the elementary Islamic teachings. So we perceive the fact that renaissance in Islamic countries always begins with a return to religion. Muslims realize that when they are on the decay it is owing to their having left their religion which once guided them to a glorious society. They realize that if their countries shall once more be on the march of progress, it is necessary for them to direct their attention to their religion—to find out what answers their religion provides for them in the solution of their problems. In Christianity it is not so : no one—not even a priest would suggest that religion had anything to offer in that respect. They even pride in the fact that religion to them means something quite different from our human problems, our political needs, our social questions. They have accepted what they call the secularization of society, the fact that western society has cut all bonds to the Church, and maintain that even so the Church is in a more pure and preferable positsion to offer 'the Gospel' to mankind, unhampered by political chains. Still in some parts of the Christian world it is common to call any system, any civilization, any policy—Christian, but this only proves the point that there is no such thing as a Christian culture, civilization or policy. Even for that reason Christainty degenerated into being a tool for those in power, which fact showed itself in its glaring reality as soon as Constantine made Christianity a state-religion. The effect of the Renaissance on the Christian Church was an even more outspoken disliking for 'secular knowledge', and so the conflict between Faith and Knowledge proceeded up to our time, when most Lutheran Theologians declare that the problem is solved. The fact is that they have dissolved it by declaring that faith has nothing to do with knowledge—so there could be no conflict.

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In Islam there has never been any conflict between religion and knowledge, not to any deep or great extent really, but for quite another reason : Islamic theologians have from the Holy Prophet via Ibn Rushd (Averroes) up to modern theologians as Mustafa al-Maraghi or the Holy Founder of our Movement declared that there could be no conflict, and if there appeared to be one, we ought to correct our interpretations according to the findings of knowledge. That is not as some Christians would say a 'surrender to science', but it is

a deep conviction that springs from the fact that to us nature, its laws, and the laws that govern our thinking, too, are the work of God, while religion is the word of God—and between these two there could be no contradiction—unless we accepted—God forbid—some contradiction in the essence of God.

But with such a view of science and knowledge—all that Marxism has to say on 'religion' really only applies to Christianity—and most certainly not to a religion as Islam.

Islam on the genesis of religion

To Islam the origin of religion is found in that experience called revelation (*wahy*). This experience can be described—and has been described—by the recipients of revelation. In a tremendous, majestic and also sweet delightful way the recipient hears the spoken word of God in a clear and distinct way. The recipient is able afterwards to reproduce the words without any failing or mistake. The recipient of such revelation is completely normal, without any ailment in his mental powers, and the truth of the revelation is proved in different ways. First, it must be a well-known fact that the man who receives the revelation never told a lie earlier and led a perfect and sinless life in all respects.

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Secondly, his revelation must have an ennobling effect on the moral life of his followers.

Thirdly, the movement started by the recipient must in the end triumph over his opponents.

Fourthly, his revelation must contain prophecies that are fulfilled without the least defect.

This last proof of the truth of his claim to receive revelation from God makes it possible to ascertain that God is, and is all-Knowing, and is the Originator both of the revealed word and of history - because history will bear out that which was beyond the power of man to predict with a complete fulfilment of every prophecy.

Beside this primary revelation (which is called *Wahy* proper),

there are other forms of revelations such as true dreams, and visions which are in many cases granted to ordinary believers.

The fact that this revelation is not only a fact of history, but that it is in Islam an ever living reality, gives a certainty of faith in true Muslims which must be astonishing to atheist Marxists who believe that religion is just so many superstitions and completely opposed to scientific knowledge. But as a matter of fact, Islam is by virtue of its giving direct access to God not in any way superstitious, but is based fully on experience.

In this way Islam presents to every age quite another doctrine of the genesis of religion, and what is more than can be said on the Marxist doctrines—Islam is in a position to prove its teachings and doctrines.

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The Tobacco Habit

Mr. Bashir Ahmed Orchard

The harmful effects of tobacco upon the human system are multifarious. It fouls the lungs, stomadh, intestines, blood, breath and teeth. It agitates the mind and the nerves. It is a vicious habit.

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If the harm caused from tobacco injured only the physical organism of the body then that in itself shoud be sufficient reason to abstain from its use; but we are looking beyond the body into the inner realm of the soul. We find that even here the noxious effects of tobacco creep in and pollute its purity and consequently weaken its condtion. This statement is likely to meet with the disapproval of those who are still victims of the habit. Nevertheless, we are confident that as they read on they will realize that there is no escape from this truth. Once *the mind has accepted this* fact it will become much easier for the pious believer to act upon a firm resolution to shake off his chains. Such habits are like chains that hold down the believer from soaring to greater spiritual heights.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih our beloved spiritnal leader, has not equivocated when explaining the pernicious disadvantage of habits :

"Habit and custom are another source of evil and sin. A person sometimes feels impelled to commit a wrong in order to find the means of satisfying a habit or of conforming to a custom. For instance, the manners or customs of certain a country or class may require a man to dress in a particular style and, not having the means of complying with this unwritten social, he may find himself compelled to adopt unlawfnl means to acquire money sufficient to enable him to comply with it. Islam

has abolished all such habits and customs. For instance, in eating and drinking it has prohibited the use of everything that is likely to result in the formation of a habit and to enslave a man, such as wine, liquors, stimulents etc. It describes habits as chains which it is the function of Islam to cut asunder. In regard to customs, Islam says that they are a burden which men are often compelled to carry out of fear of ridicule, though it is often too heavy for them to bear, as the rich and the poor, the heavily indebted and the free from debt are all expected to conform to them. Customs compel people to commit sins and crimes in their effort to preserve a fictitious dignity in the eyes of their equals. They thus destroy their souls in the anxiety to preserve outward appearances."[1]

Those who are content to remain static in their religious way of life may not yet be able to grasp how the tobacco habit dulls the colour of the soul. We will, therefore, examine the matter further.

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Unclean Habit

Inner cleanliness of the body is perhaps more important than outer cleanlinass in asmuchas it is the smooth functioning of the inner organs that keeps the life force pulsating.

The condition of the body plays an important role in the growth of the soul. This fact is evinced from the well known axiom "Cleanliness is next to Godliness". This truth also pervades the philosophy of *wuzu* (ablution before prayer).

Uncleanliness in any form, mental or physical, is undesirable. It is destructive to the development of an unsullied, refined and beautiful spirit.

Smoking and the chewing of tobocco are both unclean habits.

1. *Ahmadiyyat or true Islam*

Mind And Nerves Weakened

The smoker will say that the smoke he inhales from his cigarette, pipe or hookah tends to soothe and strengthen his nerves rather than weaken them. We say that had he never started to smoke in the first place then his nerves would never crave for the drug. By imposing the habit upon himself he has caused his nerves to become slaves of the weed. Slavery to a habit is weakness.

Take a man who has never smoked at any time in his life. One day he comes to the conclusion that his nerves are weak. A friend recommends and offers a cigarette to him. He lights it and commences to inhale the smoke. Will he enjoy it?. Will it soothe him?. Every likelihood is that his head will begin to swim; then he will start coughing and spluttering and eventually he will fling awey the cigarette in disgust. Finally he will lie down feeling worse than he was before.

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Smoking, therefore, is an acquired habit. No satisfaction is derived from it in its initial stages. It takes a little time before the nerves become impregnated with the desire for tabacco. It first weakens the nerves; then they demand more tobacso to soothe them. Avoid the habit altogether and they would never crave for it.

The proper conditioning of the nerves and mind is of immense importance in the field of spiritual development. Self control and tranquility are deeply ingrained characteristics of those righteous servants of God who have advanced deep into the depths of the spiritual ocean. Do we not desire to imitate and equal them in progress? Does not God encourage us in the Holy Quran to strive for those ineffable blessings that are never closed to those who earnestly and steadfastly dedicate their lives in the guest of righteousness?

> „And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful. The Martyrs, and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these." (4:70)

In these latter days was not Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the Promised Messiah—an exemplar for us in this respect ? Read over and over again his following words :

"I have such control over my passions and God has made myself so submissive that even if a man go on abusing me in my face in the foulest manner for one year he would at last himself feel ashamed and will have to admit his failure to move me even a little."

A trúly righteous man possesses an equable, sweet-tempered and well-balanced temperament. He is the master of his emotions. His placid countenance reveals that he is the governor of his nervous system and he never allows it to govern him.

The tobacco habit places the individual under the control and dictates of his nerves. It is abundantly clear, therefore, that habit is a veritable curse.

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Unedifying Example

An important duty of a Muslim is to preach and endeavour to attract people of other faiths towards Islam. It is also his duty to give spiritual encouragement to his own bretheren in faith. In order to do this, it is, of course, desirable to have a fundamental knowledge of the teachings of Islam. What is even more valuable is an inspirational character. A combination of both is the ideal.

If a Muslim is unable to break his own bad habits then all his words of encouragement to others to discard their evil or bad habits will possess little striking force. They will re-bound like rubber balls off a wall.

No Muslim should be content in mind if he is aware of defects existing in his way of life. He should fight them with all his might. Such is the spirit which every Muslim should endeavour to create within himself.

Cut out the tobacco habit and let this spirit shine forth with brighter lusture !

A Word Of Encouragement

This article is really directed to those Muslims and, in

particular, to Ahmadies who have some appreciation of spiritual values. Remember that you are privileged to have at hand the source of greatest power in the universe, the Holy Quran.

Your desire to leave off the tobacco habit is based essentially on a spiritual incentive. Thousands upon thousands of people from all walks of life have succeeded. They were urged by reasons of far less importance. How is it then that they should lead the way for you when you should be leading the way for them ?

If you mean to remain as you are, smoking and chewing tobaceo from day to day, then please pass this article on to someone else having greater spiritual ambition than yourself. If, however, you absorb what you have read and sharpen your spiritual sword for an all out onslought upon this venomous enemy then a new dawn awaits you and you will march forward freed from these chains.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

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Prophethood: A Blessing

P. E. V. Muhammad Ismail, Rangoon.

Islam is a blessing for mankind. It is a panadcea for all maladies: spiritual, social, economic, etc. Today humanity is confronted with a multitude of intricate problems. Statesmen, social workers, and the intelligentsia are facing the unprecedented social, economic and other problems that have created unrest all over the world.

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The Muslims are the custodians of the Quran. They are expected to be true to their pledge. What is that pledge? They take pledge before God in their daily prapers by reciting the form of oath viz. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah and Muhammad is the bearer of His message.

To bear witness to the unity of God is a highly meritorious deed. Nothing pleases God more than leading a righteous life and glorifying Him by bearing testimony to His unity and majesty.

A servant musr know the attitude, manners and temper of his master in order to serve him well. A good and intelligent servant earns good reward because he knows how to serve his master to his entire satisfaction. Similarly, a servant of God tries to win His pleasure by acting according to His will. The servant of God becomes a mirror in which the attributes of God are reflected. It should be noted that Divine attributes are not shared by any creature. God is unique in His person and none is equal to Him. God Almighty has revealed the Scriptures in which admonitions were given. The attributes of God are also expounded therein with a view to providing mankind with profound moral lessons and examples.

Divine messengers are the embodiment of the Divine attributes of mercy, love, holiness, truth, peace, patience and so forth. They are the harbingers of Divine guidance and a mercy to mankind. By

their advent all the avenues of progress are thrown open to them. They draw their people from the quagmire of sins and iniquity. They remove the barrier of discrimination and iniquality. In short, they are the redeemers and benefactors of humanity. By their advent the nations are roused from their sloth and slumber. Tolerance, peace, equity and uprightness are the key-note of their Mission.

The Divine Messengers were examples of virtue to their peoples. If precepts do not conform to actions people will not take any interest in the preachers. With respect to Divine Messengers if a person notices any contradiction in their words and deeds he forms a low opinion about them. The Messengers of God are immune from such drawbacks and failings. Their thoughts, words and deeds are not impelled by the low desires of flesh like other common people; their senses and movements are under the control of the Supreme Being. Like worldly people these godly men are not disturbed even for a moment by the prompting of evil thoughts and vagaries of day dreams. Their entire being is wrapped in holy spirit and the shadow of God covers them wherever they may happen to be. They act and speak as they are bidden from on high. Such holy men are infallible guides to mankind. They do not descend from heaven but are like other mortals who appear in the world and pass away.

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It may be asked that what is the need of a new Prophet or rccurrence of fresh revelation in the presenee of the perfect Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him) and the infallible guidance of the Quran.

The advent of another prophet does not detract from the perfection of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessing of God be upon him). It rather enhances the truth and greatness of the Holy prophet. The Holy Quran is an inexhaustible storehouse of spiritual knowledge. It was given to mankind for their edification till the end of the world. Whenever the Muslims deviate from its teachings and set at naught the very purpose of its revelation then God Almighty raises a Prophet or a Reformer to bring home the truth and to unfold the profound significance of the Holy Quran to mankind. The Quran has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad

for the guidance and salvation of humanity at large. It will never become a dead letter or a sealed book in the hands of Muslims. When the followers of the Holy Prophet cease to observe the Quranic teachings and deviate from the right path only then a new Prophet is raised to bring back the stray sheep to the fold of Islam.

Revelation and prophethood, which are the greatest and highest boons of God, seem to Muslims an impossibility after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessing of Allah). It is a gross misconception on the part of Muslims to believe in such doctrines as are againt Islam. The Holy Prophet's advent is a mercy and blessing to mankind. Revelation, the only avenue of Holy Communion with God, were it to terminate with his advent according to the erroneous belief of some of the Muslims, it connotes that the Holy Prophet is not a mercy to mankind inasmuch as with his advent it had been deprived of the perennial fountain-head of the Divine blessings which had ever continued to gush forth before his appearance in the word. The Holy Prophet came with a perfect Law, which cannot be abrogated and superseded by any prophet of the future. With the advent of the Holy Prophet the heavenly blessings are neither withheld nor intercepted, rather they shall continue to flow in abundance till the Doom's day. Both the Quran and the hadith hold out promise and great hope to Muslims about Divine succour and blessings.

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God Almighty never ceases to converse with those Muslims who guard themselves against evil and sin and also with those who merge themselves in the love of the Prophet by following whose precepts and example they become like his image. God's attributes of speech and guidance like His other attributes still operate and uot one of them will ever become defunct.

The strength and glory of Islam lies in the continuity of the appearance of Divine Messengers and revelation, which are the only medium of the expression of Divine pleasure and relation with His Servants. The Holy Quran affirms that through Islam alone a man can attain communion with God and salvation.

Today mankind is wallowing in the mire of depravity and sins. Divine behests, moral and ethical laws are openly flouted. The human race stands on the verge of spiritual annihilation and extinction. God has sent a Prophet to warn mankind of the evil

consequences of their misdeeds and to invite them to the Kingdom of Heaven; but alas! they have turned a deaf ear to the clarion call of the Messenger. The world is drifting towards an unparalleled catastrophe. Would that humanity hearken to the message of Heaven so that it may escape from the vortex of cataclysm. The Prince of Peace has inaugurated the Millenium. Fortunate and blessed are they who rally under the banner of the Messenger of the latter days, who appeared in the person of Ahmad of Qadian.

These holy men are elevated to spiritual stations by God for their goodness. There are degrees of rank in their spiritual stations. The prophethood is the highest and sublimest rank which is conferred only on few persons according to the need and suitability of the time and circumstances of the world. It is open to a person to reach the saintly station through earnest striving and prayer, but prophethood is reserved for a certain occasion. That is the reason why God had not sent a prophet for many centuries since the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessing of Allah), and when the appointed time came He sent a prophet in this age. The function of a prophet is to reinstate the teachings of God and faith that would have disappeared from the world. Such a prophet appears only when the world reaches the critical condition like that of the times of by-gone Prophets.

Today the condition of the world is similar to those dark ages, when God had sent Prophets for the regeneration of the nations of the world. It is an inexorable law of nature that whenever the earth becomes dry due to scorching heat of the sun, the winds drive the rain-laden clouds to the parched ground in order to breathe a new life into the dead earth. Just as the dead earth is revived by rain, similarly mankind, which is spiritually dead and degenerated is regenerated again and reformed by revelations—the heavenly water.

The Prophets and Mujadddids, like the rain-bearing clouds, are the recipients of revelations, who appear to save mankind from moral and spiritual death.

With the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) all the divine blessings were consummated in Islam. The Holy Quran is a perfect Book of law. These two are inestimable boons of God, which He vouchsafed to mankind, out of His infinite grace and mercy.

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The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, Distt. Gurdaspur, India, when he started initiating members under certain conditions. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. He made the startling disclosure that Jesus Christ had escaped the crucifixion and died a natural death at the ripe old age of 120 and was buried at Sirinagar, Kashmir. His claim to be the Mahdi, Messiah and Krishna raised a storm of opposition from the ranks of Muslims, Christians and Hindus of the Indian sub-continent. But the number of his followers daily increased and extended into hundreds of thousands by the year 1908 when he breathed his last.

He was succeeded, on his death, by Hazrat Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, one of the most devoted of his followers, as his First Successor. The Ahmadiyya Community, at his demise in 1914, elected Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, son of the Promised Messiah, as his Second Successor.

During the tenure of his office, he particularly emphasized the propagation of the true principles of Islam and sent missionaries abroad. There is now a network of Ahmadiyya Missions all over the world. Another feature of his Caliphate is the erection of mosques in the leading towns of Europe, America and Africa.

After the partition of India in 1947 the head-quarters of the Ahmadiyya Movement moved to the newly-erected town of Rabwah in West Pakistan.

Any information or literature about *Ahmadiyyat* can be had from the Ahmadiyya missions in different parts of the world or direct from :

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